

Q: What is an Automatic Facility HPSA Designation?

A: *The federal government grants a temporary HPSA designation to HRSA funded clinics and health centers that agree to provide care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Automatic Designation allows the provider sites to recruit NHSC scholars and Loan Repayment recipients and other types of federal assistance.*

Q: How is an Automatic Designation different from the conventional process?

A: *Automatic designation is not obtained through a formal application process. You and your satellite sites are eligible as long as you are a HRSA funded or Rural Health Clinic site as described in the Health Care Safety Net Amendments.*

Q: Is there a drawback to Automatic Designation?

A: *The lack of a detailed analysis determined by a conventional score may not accurately reflect the actual population(s) and medical needs being served and therefore may negatively affect the level and type of assistance for which the practice site qualifies. While it uses similar variables –provider-to-patient ratios, distance/travel time to nearest site, poverty rates, and infant mortality/low birth weight rate – to establish need, it is not site-specific and the automatic score draws from the status of the established, neighboring “parent” site. (For more information go to the federal Bureau of Health Professions at: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/autoscore.htm>)*

Q: Are facilities with Automatic Designation eligible for all of the same program assistance as sites with a conventional HPSA score?

A: *State administered programs, such as State Loan Repayment and Conrad J-1 Visa, do not require a conventional HPSA score for their placements. However, federally administered HRSA programs, such as National Scholars, and Federal Loan Repayment, J1-Visa Waiver, and Ready Responders rely on HPSA scores to prioritize resource allocation and level of assistance.*

Q: How do HPSA scores affect a practice site’s personnel recruitment or funding?

A: *HRSA administered placement programs, such as the NHSC/Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program, J1 Visa Waiver Program, and NHSC Ready Responders Program all require minimum scores for certain personnel placements. Additionally, higher HPSA scores are prioritized for continued funding, increasing the likelihood that the site can maintain its personnel through ongoing service commitments.*

Q: What scores should NHSC Scholarship Program participants look for when researching placement opportunities?

A: *Providing that they are NHSC Scholarship Program participants:*

*Primary care physicians may apply or practice at sites with a Primary Care HPSA score of 14 or higher. (Primary Care includes family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology and pediatrics).*

*Family Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants may apply or practice at sites with a minimum Primary Care HPSA score of 13.*

*Certified Nurse Midwives may apply or practice at sites with a minimum Primary Care HPSA score of 8.*

*Physician Psychiatrists may apply or practice at sites with a minimum Mental HPSA score of 20.*

*Dentists may apply or practice at sites with a minimum Dental HPSA score of 20.*

Q: How do HPSA scores affect Federal Loan Repayment Programs?

A: *HPSA scores determine the funding priorities and longevity for ongoing NSHC LRP awards. Clinician applications for Primary care, mental, and dental HPSA sites with scores of 14 and higher receive priority for ongoing support over HPSA sites with scores of 13 or lower. HPSAs with scores of 13 or lower are awarded in descending order, until available funds are exhausted.*

Q: I think our site qualifies for Automatic Designation. Whom do we contact?

A: *Send your written request that includes your site's name and physical address, and UDS # of the "parent" site, all of the "parent" site's affiliate's addresses to:*

*HRSA – Shortage Designation Branch*

*Attn: Andy Jordan*

*5600 Fishers Lane*

*Room 8C-26*

*Rockville, MD 20857*

*Phone: 301-594-0816 [ajordan@hrsa.gov](mailto:ajordan@hrsa.gov) Website: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/autoscore.htm>*

Q: I received an Automatic Facility HPSA Designation under the Health Care Safety Amendments of 2002. How long does the designation last?

A: *All Automatic Facility HPSA designations expire in October 2008.*

Q: What happens when the Automatic Designation expires in 2008?

A: *Sites will have to reapply through the conventional process administered by the state.*

Q: Are language barriers for linguistically isolated groups examined to demonstrate need?

A: *No. There are no provisions to demonstrate the inaccessibility of linguistically isolated groups as a barrier to healthcare access for a Geographic or low-income population designation.*

Q: I heard there are new designation criteria that will be replacing the current criteria. When will they be in effect?

A: *No effective date has been announced as of December 1, 2005. Once authorized and adopted, the Federal Register publishes revised regulations as a Public Notice.*

Q: How will the new criteria affect current designations?

A: *HPSA designations are updated every three years and stay in effect until the new regulations are implemented. It is anticipated there will be a phase-in period to update data conforming to new criteria (including MUAs/MUPs).*